

Salmonid Team

Meeting of March 10, 2006 – Meeting Notes

Item 1: Team Members

Team Members in attendance included: Al Cadd, Al Nelson, Amy Harris Mai, Bill Cox, Bob Anderson, Bob Coey, Carolyn Wasem, Don McEnhill, Jake Mackenzie, Julie Collins, Marc Kelley, Michael Corrigan, Pete Downs, and Ralph Locke. Attending by phone: Brian Johnson.

Additional/Potential Team Members:

Mike Bierman volunteered to serve as a member of the team representing the Water Advisory Committee.

Mike Martini, pending a vote from Santa Rosa City Council on Tuesday, March 14, 2006, will serve as a member of the team.

Item 2: Goals and Purposes Meeting

The primary goal of the meeting is to determine which working groups individual Coalition (team) members want to serve on. Working groups was substituted for the term “subcommittees” as the body acts only in a capacity to make recommendation to NOAA and CDFG. In the end, NOAA Fisheries and CDFG have final regulatory responsibility.

In the interest of openness and transparency, minutes and meeting notices will be posted on the Water Agency website for public review and/or comment. A decision will be made at the next meeting as to public input sessions.

Item 3: Feedback on Meeting with Environmentalists

Several team members felt that it will be difficult to find another interested environmental group: most have a full plate and a work plan in place. General Plan and other processes are taking most of the environmental community’s time. The Sierra Club has the largest membership in watershed and would likely have the most interest. Participation from the Laguna Foundation is a challenge in that it is a focused group in a focused area. That area is outside of the Dry Creek and the Alexander Valleys of the watershed.

It was stated that if the Sierra Club has someone to devote, it would be beneficial to the process. However, there is some skepticism within the community about the process. Everyone in the environmental community wants to know what the end product will be. Is it likely regulatory? What does the private sector want? Environmentalists heard first that critical habitat was the issue.

In response to those concerns, the team changed the language in the work plan and the Preliminary MOU, signed by certain team members and the Sonoma County Water

Agency, to reference something other than removal from critical habitat as the only outcome of the process: i.e. other assurances that would meet requirements of the ESA.

Several team members believe there will be some trading involved. Private sector is looking for certainty. Everyone is expected to put something on the table. It would be beneficial, from an open and transparency perspective, to reference regulatory certainty in the goals of the team.

It was suggested that this team might want to address TMDL issues as well. TMDL issues will likely be flushed out in the work groups.

Item 4: Feedback on Structure/Contribution of Members

A discussion re: the difference between this effort and other efforts ensued.

The major difference in the minds of many team members is that this process has a number of private stakeholders participating. This is a larger process that also includes environmental representatives. This process involves landowners and environmentalists; something key if we are to meet with success. There can be some coordination between this team and other groups.

Further, the work plan specifically indicates that this “Team will coordinate the cooperative conservation plan with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the SCWA’s Russian River Section 7 consultation process to ensure consistency.”

A discussion ensued regarding the structure of the Water Advisory Committee and parallels to this team. WAC meets regularly and includes eight prime contractors. WAC’s role is to advise the water agency and reviews proposed budget and comments before approved by the Board of Supervisors. Sonoma County Water Agency has to consult with WAC on a variety of issues. Roles of the WAC include: adoption of plans regarding water utilization, BMPs, and conservation. The final product is a water management plan. Various practices that are adopted by jurisdictions may become a part of this team’s effort. WAC is interested in conservation as well as water supply to ratepayers.

It was stated that Santa Rosa is the largest prime contractor and the largest producer of treated wastewater. Conservation is of prime importance. Board of Public Utilities is a level of governance that oversees operations of the public utilities (Note: City of Santa Rosa’s BPU). The City is seen as playing a major role in offering opportunities to offset potable water and should be an asset to this team.

It is of great interest to many members of the team as to how treated wastewater might be supplied to agriculture interests in the northern part of the watershed.

Item 5: Public Inclusion in the Process

It was stated that it would be beneficial to take public comments at meeting, however balancing the need for this with the need for efficiency is the challenge.

At a minimum, the team will hold public input sessions. However, until a work product exists, it is difficult to take comment. The public, on an ongoing basis can access and respond to information about the meetings from the SCWA website.

It was again stated that the team is advisory to CDFG and NOAA, not voting on any final conclusions. The team will offer input and offer what it believes to be a better way to achieve conservation and economic/regulatory certainty. It is important to convey this to the public as well. The website will be a goal for the week of the 13th of March.

Item 6: Transparency in Goals

It was stated that the team needs to be honest and true. Is part of the reason that the team was formed to respond to changes in regulations? It helps with transparency if the team is honest about why the team is here. It will let everyone know what the team is.

Some team members believe that private property owners need to be offered some incentives. Private property owners can get a lot more done for conservation by working with NOAA than could be achieved through critical habitat. Private property owners won't cooperate if there is not something beneficial at the end. The bulk of conservation efforts fall to property owners

Additionally, the team needs to have a serious discussion re: wanting to ship treated wastewater to Alexander and Dry Creek Valleys.

In response, one team member stated that the City of Santa Rosa provides a partnership – not a mandate. There is no great need to find a place to use that treated wastewater. The City of Santa Rosa is happy to provide treated wastewater if it is available and requested.

Item 7: Washington Trip Recap

The trip to Washington was informational in nature. Marc Kelley and Carolyn Wasem along with SCWA representatives, a WAC representative and a County representative met with various offices to ensure that the team has continued support. It was conveyed that the team needs to identify some on the ground efforts, and make progress towards those efforts.

Item 8: Structure of the Group

One team member stated that there would be times that different interests would need to bring in other individuals, specifically those with technical or biological expertise.

Team members did not voice any disagreement with the need to do this, or the approach. This would likely take place at the working group level. The team membership would not be expanded.

Item 9: Mapping Needs

The team will explore the ability of the local CDFG office to produce the maps needed to identify areas for conservation. Another potential resource might include the Russian River Interactive Information System (RRIIS).

Item 10: Identifying Conservation Efforts

One of the first goals of the team is to prioritize streams for enhancement and restoration. CDFG knows where the best streams are, and where the most valuable habitat is. It was stated that everyone needs to practice fishery management at the mountaintops. The team needs to look at improving land management practices, and deal with sedimentation. Work has to be carried out in the watersheds. Much can be done to correct sedimentation, and land practices by farmers could contribute to that.

Some team members stated that they believe the Vineyard Ordinance has gone a long way in solving the sedimentation problem as it relates to farming. However, future, long term efforts must be put into place. Getting BMPs specific to land use should be a primary goal of the team.

To be effective, a suite of efforts: demonstration projects, BMPs, instream – passage problems, roads, drainage off of the vineyards all need to be addressed. The team needs to reach some agreement as to the five things that the team wants to demonstrate in a year. The team needs to get a few projects underway.

Item 11: Closing

Next Meeting will be March 30th, 8:00 am. at the SCWA.